

Message Text

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APPROVED BY P - MR. HABIB

S/S-O :TGMARTIN

NEA - MR. ATHERTON

WHITE HOUSE- DR. BRZEZINSKI

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INFO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

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WHITE HOUSE FOR DR.BRZEZINSKI ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PBOR, MOPS, MILI, LE, US, US, PLO

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

1. PLEASE DELIVER TO BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE FOL-
LOWING MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER:

2. BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRIME MINISTER:

SINCE YOU RAISED THE MATTER WITH ME IN JULY,

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I HAVE BEEN DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE
DANGEROUS SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THE THREAT IT
POSES TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT SARKIS,
TO THE SAFETY OF THE POPULATION IN THE SOUTH, TO ISRAELI
CITIZENS IN THE BORDER AREA, AND ULTIMATELY TO REGIONAL
STABILITY WHICH IS SO IMPORTANT TO THE PEACE EFFORTS YOU
AND I ARE COMMITTED TO.

FOR THESE REASONS, WE HAVE BEEN TRYING THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD TO ENCOURAGE STEPS WHICH WOULD EASE THE TENSIONS THERE, REDUCE THE SECURITY THREAT TO ISRAEL, AND PERMIT PRESIDENT SARKIS TO ASSERT GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT THE AREA AND RESTORE LAW AND ORDER, THEREBY MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES TO RETURN TO THEIR FARMS AND VILLAGES. WHILE WE DO NOT ENDORSE IN ANY WAY A CONTINUED PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE IN AREAS CLOSE TO ISRAEL'S BORDERS, THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT NEGOTIATED BY THE LEBANESE AND SYRIANS WITH THE PALESTINIANS WAS IN OUR VIEW A USEFUL STEP SINCE IT WOULD INVOLVE A CEASEFIRE, A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION OF PALESTINIAN FORCES, AND A PULLBACK OF THOSE REMAINING TO POSITIONS TEN OR MORE KILOMETERS FROM ISRAEL'S BORDERS.

WE THEREFORE URGED ISRAEL TO ACQUIESCE IN THE CARRYING OUT OF THE CEASEFIRE AND PULLBACK, AND TO ASSURE THE COOPERATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS OVER WHICH ISRAEL HAS INFLUENCE.

WHEN YOUR GOVERNMENT ASKED THAT A MORE EXTENSIVE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL BE SOUGHT, WE PASSED ISRAEL'S PROPOSALS TO THE LEBANESE IN GOOD FAITH. AFTER TALKS WITH THE LEBANESE IT BECAME FULLY APPARENT TO US THAT THERE WAS NO REALISTIC POSSIBILITY AT THIS TIME OF ACHIEVING ANYTHING

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FURTHER ALONG THE LINES DESIRED BY ISRAEL AND THAT THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT ITSELF WAS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER OF FALLING APART.

THE ISRAELI DECISION TO SUPPORT A CHRISTIAN MILITARY INITIATIVE AT THIS DELICATE STAGE SERIOUSLY COMPLICATED THE MATTER, SINCE IT OCCURRED AT A TIME WHEN THE PALESTINIANS WERE PREPARED TO WITHDRAW FROM AREAS IN SOUTH LEBANON, INCLUDING THE VERY HILL THE CHRISTIANS RECENTLY OCCUPIED. WHILE WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO KEEP THE MATTER FROM BECOMING A PUBLIC ISSUE BETWEEN US, WE COULD NOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE CLAIM THAT THE MOST RECENT ISRAELI MILITARY ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE BORDER IN SUPPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS HAVE BEEN FOR SELF-DEFENSE. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO INCIDENTS IN THE PAST WHEN ISRAEL UNDERTOOK ACTIONS LIMITED IN TIME AND SCOPE AND THERE WAS A PLAUSIBLE CASE TO BE MADE THAT SUCH ACTIONS WERE IN RESPONSE TO PALESTINIAN THREATS TO THE ISRAELI BORDER AREA.

I HAVE BEEN VERY DISAPPOINTED THAT YOU HAVE NOT HEEDDED MY REQUEST THAT ISRAELI MILITARY UNITS BE WITHDRAWN

IMMEDIATELY FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY.

IT IS MY STRONGEST WISH THAT OUR DIFFERENCES WITH REGARD TO THE HANDLING OF THE SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION NOT DEVELOP INTO A MAJOR PROBLEM IN U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIPS. ACCORDINGLY, I MUST POINT OUT THAT CURRENT ISRAELI MILITARY ACTIONS IN LEBANON ARE A VIOLATION OF OUR AGREEMENTS COVERING THE PROVISION OF AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND THAT, AS A CONSEQUENCE, IF THESE ACTIONS ARE NOT IMMEDIATELY HALTED, CONGRESS WILL HAVE TO BE INFORMED OF THIS FACT, AND THAT FURTHER DELIVERIES WILL HAVE TO BE TERMINATED.

I MUST THEREFORE ASK YOU AGAIN, MR. PRIME MINISTER, TO
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WITHDRAW ISRAELI MILITARY FORCES FROM LEBANON IMMEDIATELY. AS COMMUNICATED TO DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN BY OUR CHARGE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE FORCEFUL AND INTENSIVE EFFORTS WITH THE LEBANESE AND THE SYRIANS TO ASSURE THAT PALESTINIAN FORCES IN THE SOUTH IMMEDIATELY AGREE TO AND COOPERATE WITH A CEASEFIRE, NOT TAKE MILITARY ADVANTAGE OF THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, AND BEGIN THEIR AGREED PULLBACK. WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH LEBANESE LEADERS WHO ARE READY TO DO THEIR BEST TO ASSURE PALESTINIAN COOPERATION. THEY HAVE BEGUN CONSULTATIONS WITH PALESTINIAN LEADERS. FOR ISRAEL TO DELAY LONGER THE WITHDRAWAL AND SEEK ADDITIONAL LEBANESE COMMITMENTS CAN ONLY COMPLICATE MATTERS FURTHER.

WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO URGE THE LEBANESE TO ENTER INTO DIRECT TALKS WITH ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVES IN MILITARY CHANNELS UNDER UN AUSPICES. IN THE PERIOD AHEAD, WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO ACHIEVE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE SOUTH THAT WOULD BE MORE SATISFACTORY TO THE ISRAELIS THAN WHAT HAD BEEN NEGOTIATED UNDER THE SHTAURA AGREEMENT. WE ALREADY HAVE A COMMITMENT FROM PRESIDENT SARKIS THAT HE WILL TRY TO SEEK A MORE EXTENSIVE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL AT AN EARLY DATE, AND THIS IS AN IMPORTANT CONCESSION.

I WOULD NOT HAVE PRESSED YOU TO MAKE DECISIONS WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO YOU, MR. PRIME MINISTER, IF I WERE NOT CONVINCED THAT THE COMMON INTERESTS OF ISRAEL AND THE U.S. DICTATE AN IMMEDIATE LESSENING OF TENSIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON AND AVOIDANCE OF A SERIOUS AND PUBLIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US OVER YOUR USE OF AMERICAN-SUPPLIED MILITARY EQUIPMENT, ON WHICH OUR LAW IS VERY EXPLICIT. I DO NOT WANT ANY MORE MISSILES FIRED INTO ISRAELI TERRITORY KILLING OR MAIMING ISRAELI CITIZENS. I DO NOT WANT TO
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SEE THIS ISSUE EXPOSED TO THE WORLD AS A CONFRONTATION
BETWEEN YOU AND ME. I HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT YOU WILL
ACCEPT MY WORDS IN THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN
DELIVERED AND WILL TAKE THE STEPS WHICH WILL BE RECOGNIZED
BY ALL AS PRUDENT AND STATESMANLIKE. SINC&BELY, JIMMY
CARTER. END TEXT. VANCE

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